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David: Loving Your Enemy

1 Samuel 24

"I love my enemy. I love God. It's my next-door neighbor I can't stand!"

"He hurt me so much that I don't think I'll ever be able to forgive him."

"Of course I've dealt with my anger and resentment. I just can't stand to be in the same room with her."

GROUP DISCUSSION. What person, or type of person, do you find difficult to love? Explain.

PERSONAL REFLECTION. Paul says that without love our Christian lives amount to nothing (1 Corinthians 13). Jesus said the world will know he is risen by our love for one another (John 13:34-35). Ask God to find you with his love for himself and for others.

It's difficult to love those who have hurt us deeply. Saul slandered and falsely accused David. He hated and feared him because God had anointed David to become king in his place (1 Samuel 16:1-13). In order to protect his power and position, Saul kept trying to kill David. In this chapter we observe David's response. *Read 1 Samuel 24.*

1. What aspects of David's character are revealed in this passage?

2. Saul had an overwhelming military advantage over David (compare 24:2 to 23:13). In spite of this, how does David suddenly have the opportunity to kill Saul (24:3-4)?

3. How do David's men interpret the circumstances (v. 4)?

4. If you were in David's position, why might you have been tempted to follow the counsel of your men?

5. Why do you think David is "conscience-stricken" after cutting off the corner of Saul's robe (vv. 5-6, 10)?

6. How can viewing our enemy from God's perspective enable us to have a change of heart like David's?

7. How does David's proper understanding of himself and of God's

judgment set him free to love his enemy (vv. 8-15)?

How can a similar understanding help us love others more freely?

8. Describe the powerful effect David's attitude and actions had on Saul (vv. 16-21).

9. Identify one or two people who might be considered your enemies. Why is it hard to act lovingly or respectfully toward such people?

What practical steps can you take to serve as a channel of God's love to the person(s) you have identified?

Spend time praying that God will grant you freedom to love as David did.

Now or Later

Read the parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:25-37. What further instructions does Jesus give us about loving our neighbors?